

## **3.0 INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS**

In the mitigation planning process, it is not only important to identify which hazards a community is at risk from, but it also is important to identify the resources the community has available to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from natural, technological, or societal hazards. This section outlines the current resources available to St. Lucie County to reduce the risks posed by the hazards identified in the previous section. Mitigation programs, policies, and projects on the Federal, State, regional, and local levels are described and documented in this section. Sources of intergovernmental coordination, methods of strengthening the role of local governments, and background on private sector involvement also are documented.

### **3.1 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

#### **3.1.1 FEMA**

FEMA has the lead Federal role in natural hazard mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery. FEMA has several programs aimed at reducing the risks posed by natural hazards in communities nationwide.

##### **3.1.1.1 *PDM Program***

The PDM Program was authorized by §203 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Assistance and Emergency Relief Act (Stafford Act), 42 U.S.C., as amended by §102 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. Funding for the program is provided through the National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Fund to assist states and local governments in implementing cost-effective hazard mitigation activities that complement a comprehensive mitigation program. The Act establishes criteria for State and local hazard mitigation planning. Local governments applying for PDM funds through the states will have to have an approved local mitigation plan prior to the approval of local mitigation project grants. States also will be required to have an approved standard State mitigation plan in order to receive PDM funds for State or local mitigation projects.

##### **3.1.1.2 *National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)***

The U.S. Congress established the NFIP with the passage of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968. The NFIP is a Federal program enabling property owners in participating communities to purchase insurance as a protection against flood losses in exchange for State and community floodplain management regulations that reduce future flood damages. Participation in the NFIP is based on an agreement between communities and the Federal Government. If a community adopts and enforces a floodplain management ordinance to reduce future flood risk to new construction in floodplains, the Federal Government will make flood insurance available within the community as a financial protection against flood losses. This insurance is designed to provide an insurance alternative to disaster assistance to reduce the escalating costs of repairing damage to buildings and their contents caused by floods.

#### **3.1.1.3 Community Rating System (CRS)**

The NFIP CRS was implemented in 1990 as a program for recognizing and encouraging community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP standards. Under the CRS, flood insurance premium rates are adjusted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from community activities that meet the three goals of the CRS: 1) reduce flood losses; 2) facilitate accurate insurance rating; and 3) promote the awareness of flood insurance. There are ten CRS classes: Class 1 requires the most credit points and gives the largest premium reduction; Class 10 receives no premium reduction. The CRS recognizes 18 creditable activities, organized under 4 categories numbered 300 through 600: Public Information, Mapping and Regulations, Flood Damage Reduction, and Flood Preparedness.

#### **3.1.1.4 Map Modernization**

The goal of FEMA's Map Modernization Plan is to upgrade the 100,000 panel flood map inventory by

- developing up-to-date flood hazard data for all floodprone areas nationwide to support sound floodplain management and prudent flood insurance decisions;
- providing the maps and data in digital format to improve the efficiency and precision with which mapping program customers can use this information;
- fully integrating FEMA's community and State partners into the mapping process to build on local knowledge and efforts;
- improving processes to make it faster to create and update the maps; and
- improving customer services to speed processing of flood map orders and raise public awareness of flood hazards.

#### **3.1.1.5 FMA Program**

The goal of the FMA program is to reduce or eliminate claims under the NFIP. FMA provides funding to assist States and communities in implementing measures to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insurable under the NFIP. There are three types of grants available under FMA: Planning, Project, and Technical Assistance Grants.

#### **3.1.1.6 National Hurricane Program**

The National Hurricane Program conducts and supports many projects and activities that help protect communities and their residents from hurricane hazards. Three key components of the Program are Response and Recovery; Planning, Training, and Preparedness; and Mitigation.

#### **3.1.1.7 Other Programs**

The National Mitigation Strategy was developed to provide a framework for reducing the exposure of all Americans to the catastrophic losses caused by natural disasters. In addition, FEMA sponsors the Mitigation Assistance, Disaster Preparedness Improvement Grant, Community Assistance, and Fannie Mae Pilot Loan Programs.

### **3.1.2 United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

The EPA is the lead Federal agency for hazardous materials issues and planning. The EPA is responsible for implementing the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA). EPCRA establishes requirements for Federal, State and local governments, Native American tribes, and industry regarding emergency planning and “Community Right-to-Know” reporting on hazardous materials and toxic chemicals. The Community Right-to-Know provisions help increase the public’s knowledge and access to information on chemicals at individual facilities, their uses, and releases into the environment. States and communities, working with facilities, can use the information to improve chemical safety and protect public health and the environment. The EPA also sponsors several grant programs focusing on environmental health, including Clean Water Act Section 319 Grants, Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Grants, and the Sustainable Development Challenge Grant.

### **3.1.3 United States Forest Service**

The Fire and Aviation Management part of the United States Forest Service is a diverse group of people working to advance technologies in fire management and suppression, maintain and improve the extremely efficient mobilization and tracking systems in place, and reach out in support of our Federal, State, and International fire partners.

### **3.1.4 United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

The USFWS oversees the implementation of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA). The purpose of the CBRA was to eliminate Federal development incentives on undeveloped coastal barriers, thereby preventing the loss of human life and property from storms, minimizing Federal expenditures, and protecting habitat for fish and wildlife. Coastal barriers are landscape features that protect the mainland, lagoons, wetlands, and salt marshes from the full force of wind, wave, and tidal energy.

### **3.1.5 United States Department of Commerce (DOC)**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) located within the DOC conducts research and gathers data about the global oceans, atmosphere, space, and sun, and applies this knowledge to science and service that touch the lives of all Americans. The DOC manages the Coastal Zone Management Program on the national level. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) within the DOC administers EDA Public Works & Infrastructure Development Grants to promote long-term economic development and assist in the construction of public works and development facilities needed to initiate and support the creation or retention of permanent jobs in the private sector in areas experiencing substantial economic distress.

### **3.1.6 National Weather Service (NWS)**

The NWS provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters, and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NWS data and products form a national information database and infrastructure, which can be used by other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community.

### **3.1.7 United States Geological Survey (USGS)**

The USGS serves the nation by providing reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and enhance and protect our quality of life.

### **3.1.8 United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)**

In addition to building projects, the Corps of Engineers, through its Flood Plain Management Services, advises communities, industries, and property owners on protection measures they can take themselves, such as zoning regulations, warning systems, and flood proofing. Last year this service responded to more than 44,000 requests for information. The value of property protected by this program is an estimated \$6.2 billion. USACE also manages beach erosion control projects, aquatic restoration programs, floodplain management initiatives, and emergency bank protection projects.

### **3.1.9 United States Fire Administration (USFA)**

As an entity of the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA, the mission of the USFA is to reduce life and economic losses due to fire and related emergencies, through leadership, advocacy, coordination, and support.

### **3.1.10 National Response Team (NRT)**

The NRT is made up of 16 Federal agencies, each with responsibilities and expertise in various aspects of emergency response to pollution incidents. With nationwide responsibilities for interagency planning, policy, and coordination, the NRT ensures that the most valuable tool in an emergency — readiness — is available for pollution incidents of all sizes and kinds. Prior to an incident, the NRT provides policy guidance and assistance. During an incident, the NRT provides technical advice and access to resources and equipment from its member agencies. The EPA serves as chair of the NRT, and the U.S. Coast Guard serves as vice-chair. This interagency planning and coordination framework is replicated at the regional, sub-regional, and local levels. In addition to interagency coordination, the NRT also engages the private sector in prevention, preparedness, and response efforts. The NRT encourages innovation and collaboration to increase the effectiveness and reduce the cost of industry compliance with planning and response regulations. The NRT receives no direct appropriations for its activities.

### **3.1.11 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

HUD sponsors a number of programs that can be used to further the goals of hazard mitigation within a community. The Community Development Block Grant Small Cities Program provides funding to improve local housing, streets, utilities, and public facilities in small cities. Disaster Recovery Initiative funds are provided for disaster relief, long-term recovery, and mitigation activities in areas affected by a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

### **3.1.12 United States Department of the Interior (USDOI)**

USDOI sponsors several programs that can help further mitigation. The Federal Land-to-Parks Transfer Program provides funds to identify, assess, and transfer available surplus Federal real property to State and local entities for use as parks, recreation areas, and open space. USDOI also supports land acquisition programs, the North American Wetland Conservation Fund, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.

### **3.1.13 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

USDA sponsors the following hazard-related programs: Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Watershed Surveys and Planning, Small Watershed Program, and Rural Utilities Service Water and Waste Disposal Program.

### **3.1.14 United States Department of Transportation**

The Federal Highway Administration sponsors a transportation enhancement program that provides funds for transportation enhancements. The Federal Transit Administration offers funding programs related to transportation capital expenses including Section 5309 Capital Funds.

## **3.2 NON-GOVERNMENT**

### **3.2.1 Firewise Communities USA**

Firewise Communities/USA is a project of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team and is the newest element of the Firewise program. It provides citizens with the knowledge necessary to maintain an acceptable level of fire readiness, while ensuring firefighters that they can use equipment more efficiently during a wildland fire emergency. The program draws on a community's spirit, its resolve, and its willingness to take responsibility for its ignition potential.

### **3.2.2 Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS)**

IBHS is a nonprofit association that engages in communication, education, engineering, and research. The goal of IBHS is to reduce deaths, injuries, property damage, economic losses, and human suffering caused by natural disasters.

### **3.2.3 American Red Cross**

Although the American Red Cross is not a government agency, its authority to provide disaster relief was formalized when, in 1905, the Red Cross was chartered by Congress to "carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace and apply the same in mitigating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry on measures for preventing the same." The Charter is not only a grant of power, but also an imposition of duties and obligations to the nation, to disaster victims, and to the people who generously support its work with their donations.

#### **3.2.4 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)**

The mission of the international nonprofit NFPA is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating scientifically-based consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education.

#### **3.2.5 Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM)**

ASFPM goals include reducing the loss of human life and property damage resulting from flooding, preserving the natural and cultural values of floodplains, promoting flood mitigation for the prevention of loss and the wise use of floodplains, and avoiding actions that exacerbate flooding.

### **3.3 STATE GOVERNMENT**

#### **3.3.1 FDCA**

The FDCA is the State's land planning agency. It is comprised of a number of divisions, including the Division of Emergency Management (DEM). The mission of the Division is to respond to emergencies, recover from them, and mitigate against their impacts. DEM provides FDCA with operational and programmatic guidance as articulated in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan to promote the goals and objectives of the nationally-based Nation Mitigation Strategy coordinated by FEMA.

The FDCA has the lead role in coordinating State resources to support local government unless the scope of the emergency warrants a higher degree of State involvement. This may occur when emergencies involve multi-jurisdictional hazards, when local governments believe the emergency is beyond the capabilities of local resources, or when the Governor determines there is an overriding concern for the safety of the public. For these situations, the Governor can designate the primary responsibility for emergency response to the State by issuing an Executive Order under the provisions of Section 252.36, Florida Statutes (F.S.).

The DEM is the designated State Warning Point in the event of a hazardous materials incident. As such, the DEM is responsible for receiving notification of an emergency from the County Communications Coordinator, and coordinating the request(s) for County support, if requested. The DEM is responsible for assisting Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) in providing warnings and instructions to the general public. Other DEM programs include the Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Grant, Residential Construction Mitigation Program, and the Florida Warning and Information Network.

#### **3.3.2 FDOF**

Over the past several years, extensive damage has resulted from wildland fire. The FDOF has major responsibility for protecting forest lands and the public from the effects of wildland fire. Local fire-rescue departments have primary responsibility for structural fires. They also are the first responders to all fires. If the local fire-rescue department has determined that the wildland fire event is beyond its capacity to fight, the local fire-rescue department can request assistance from the FDOF. When that occurs, an incident

command control is established with the State and local fire-rescue departments working together to extinguish the wildland fire.

### **3.3.3 Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**

The DEP Bureau of Beaches and Wetland Resources oversees the listing of critical erosion areas within the state. The Florida Geological Survey, housed in DEP, is the State lead on geologic hazards such as sinkholes. DEP sponsors two key mitigation related funding programs – the Revolving Fund Loan Program for Waste Water Treatment and the Pollution Control Bond Program. DEP also is home to the State Coastal Management Program. The Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP) coordinates among local, State, and Federal entities involved in coastal management activities. In addition to working with DEP's programs, the FCMP coordinates among the eight State agencies, five water management districts, and local governments that have responsibilities for coastal management under the federally-approved Florida Coastal Management Plan. The FCMP also develops partnerships with local communities to actively solve problems related to coastal development.

### **3.3.4 Florida Fish and Game Conservation Commission**

The Fish and Game Conservation Commission sponsors environmental education programs aimed at educating adult Floridians about population growth, habitat loss, and coastal and fresh water ecosystems.

### **3.3.5 Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND)**

FIND provides assistance on certain waterway related projects including navigation channel dredging, channel markers, navigation signs or buoys, boat ramps, docking facilities, fishing & viewing piers, waterfront boardwalks, inlet management, environmental education, law enforcement equipment, boating safety programs, beach renourishment, dredge material management, environment mitigation, and shoreline stabilization.

### **3.3.6 Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)**

FDOT maintains Federal and State roads as well as airport construction and zoning and various other types of transportation administration.

### **3.3.7 Building Officials Association of Florida (BOAF)**

BOAF coordinates building code enforcement among local building officials.

### **3.3.8 Florida Department of Insurance (FDOI)**

FDOI helps finance the reconstruction of communities following a disaster.

### **3.3.9 Agency for Health Care Administration**

The Agency for Health Care Administration oversees hospital construction and various health testing services.

### **3.3.10 Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (FDBPR)**

FDBPR oversees elevator maintenance and safety, building inspection, engineering, architecture, and construction contractors.

### **3.3.11 Florida Department of Corrections (FDOC)**

FDOC builds prisons, local detention facilities, and private contract facilities.

### **3.3.12 Florida Department of Education (FDOE)**

FDOE oversees school construction and maintenance. The department also has an emergency planning program that focuses on hazardous materials accident preparedness.

### **3.3.13 Florida Department of Management Services (FDOMS)**

FDOMS manages State public buildings and personnel services.

### **3.3.14 Florida Department of State (FDOS)**

The Division of Historical Resources is one of seven divisions within the Department of State, and the State agency responsible for promoting the historical, archaeological, museum, and folk culture resources in Florida. The Division Director serves as Florida's State Historic Preservation Officer, providing a liaison with the national historic preservation program conducted by the National Park Service. The Bureau of Historic Preservation identifies, evaluates, preserves, and interprets historic structures and properties that reflect the diversity of our past. The Bureau manages the nation's largest historic preservation grants program and oversees the development of State historic markers, heritage publications, and Florida folklife programs.

## **3.4 REGIONAL**

### **3.4.1 Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council**

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) was created under Section 186.501, F.S. The Council is a multi-county entity encompassing Indian River, Martin, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie counties. It has responsibility for addressing growth management issues that are multi-jurisdictional in scope. This includes working in cooperation with Federal and State agencies, planning on emergency management issues as described in Section 252.34(4), F.S. The TCRPC provides full-time staffing for the District X LEPC. The LEPC is charged with administering regional compliance with hazardous materials reporting and training laws. Its many initiatives include the State Hazardous Materials Training Task Force; District X Hazardous Materials Emergency Plan; training for emergency first response personnel; hospital and hazardous materials response team needs; public hazardous chemical awareness and reporting seminars; public and private sector hazardous materials emergency exercises; and assisting public and private facilities with chemical emergency preparedness planning.

Section 186.507, F.S. directs regional planning councils to prepare strategic regional policy plans. One of the elements that the plan must address is emergency



preparedness. The TCRPC promotes mitigation initiatives within Section 5.0, Emergency Preparedness, of its Strategic Regional Policy Plan. Specific strategies that promote mitigation are summarized below. These strategies and the policies that implement them are listed in **Appendix A**.

Strategy 5.1.1 Direct development away from areas most vulnerable to the effects of natural and manmade disasters.

Strategy 5.2.1 Utilize land use, transportation, and community planning processes to address vulnerability issues.

Strategy 5.3.1 Provide shelter space for residents of areas susceptible to flooding from the effects of hurricanes and other storms.

Strategy 5.4.1 Develop the mechanisms necessary to ensure that emergency planning agencies have input into the local government decision-making process.

Strategy 5.5.1 Initiate disaster preparedness activities which will protect lives and property and reduce evacuation times.

Strategy 5.5.2 Establish mechanisms and regulations necessary for post-disaster reconstruction to occur in a consistent manner making future disasters less destructive to life and property.

### **3.4.2 South Florida Water Management District**

The creation of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) along with the four other water management districts was enabled under Section 373.069, F.S. Historically, water management districts were created primarily to mitigate the impacts of flooding. Over the years, the districts' roles have been expanded considerably. As required under Section 373.036(2), F.S., each district has prepared a district water management plan. The plan provides the overarching vision for the districts. The key elements of the plans are

- Environmental protection and enhancement;
- Water supply;
- Flood protection; and
- Water quality protection.

One of the purposes of the plan is to provide a framework for managing conditions of extreme drought, hurricanes, and flooding. The SFWMD administers several programs that achieve hazard mitigation relative to these events. These are supported by Strategic Goals and Policies found in the District Water Management Plan such as

#### **Strategy 1.1.1 Needs and Sources, Planning**

6. The District will prepare coordinated and standardized forecasts of future water demands, withdrawal impact, and future water levels by:

- b. Utilizing statistical forecasting methods to evaluate ground and surface water resources, and to aid in the water shortage management process; and,

c. Utilizing numerical ground water flow models and surface water seasonal water balance models for prediction of future water resource availability under varying climatic and demand conditions.

7. The District will establish efficiency standards for routine urban demand management and conservation practices and criteria for implementing the same, including: Xeriscape, efficient plumbing in new construction, and minimum water conservation planned for utilities.

#### Strategy 1.1.2 Needs and Sources, Regulation

3. The District will require water conservation and efficient use of water supplies.

#### Strategy 2.1.1 Flood Protection, Planning

2. The District will assist local governments in the planning and implementation of appropriate solutions to local flood control problems and strategies for alleviating current problems and avoiding future problems.

3. The District will encourage retrofit projects to meet new development standards for flood protection and water quality, to the maximum extent feasible.

#### Strategy 2.1.3 Flood Protection, Operations and Maintenance

3. The District will, through its publications and external communications, seek to create a greater public awareness of the importance and availability of flood protection.

6. The District will communicate, in its *Emergency Management Plan*, District operations, intergovernmental coordination activities and resource management priorities that correspond to severe climatological events.

7. The District will perform emergency services, as necessary, to garnish available capacity of Central and Southern Florida Project works to other entities.

8. The District will perform other flood control services on an as needed or emergency basis as determined by the District.

#### Strategy 2.2.1 Floodplains, Planning

1. The District will encourage non-structural methods, including acquisition, regulation and application of appropriate land use and water management policies, to address or prevent water resource problems.

3. The District will assist local governments in the planning and implementation of appropriate solutions to local flood control problems and strategies for alleviating current problems and avoiding future problems.

#### Strategy 4.2.2 Minimum Flows and Levels, Regulation

3. The District will optimize surface water management control elevations in stormwater management systems to meet flood control standards, conserve water supply and protect natural systems.

In addition, the District has an emergency management program. The purpose of the program is to prevent or minimize, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies or disasters that threaten life or property within the boundaries of the SFWMD.

The SFWMD operates and maintains the regional drainage system throughout its jurisdictional area. Local drainage systems are operated by a variety of special districts, private property owners, and local governments. The local systems typically convey water from individual projects to the regional system. The District's responsibilities for flood protection relate primarily to serving as the regional water conveyance and storage entity. To meet these responsibilities, the SFWMD maintains an ongoing "Canal Conveyance Capacity" evaluation program. The objectives of the program are

- To implement a systematic approach to the inspection of all SFWMD canals to determine the need for periodic dredging;
- To inspect all canals over a 5-year period;
- To establish standard canal survey criteria; and
- To develop construction plans and specifications to implement restoration of conveyance to the canals.

In addition to private applicants, local units of government involved in building new stormwater systems or retrofitting older ones are required to petition the District for a surface water management permit approval.

Besides flood control, the District is charged with the responsibility of protecting existing water resources from excessive drawdown during periods of drought, and protecting wellfields from contamination. Also, the District administers the "Save Our Rivers" program for the purpose of protecting environmentally sensitive lands. Some of the lands purchased under the program have been situated in the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA); thus, in addition to achieving the program's primary goal - the protection of environmentally sensitive resources - the intensity and density of development in coastal high hazard areas are reduced.

### **3.5 COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

#### **3.5.1 Listing of County Agencies**

Within the existing County organizational structure, there are a number of departments that play key roles in hazard mitigation. They include the Department of Public Safety - Emergency Management Division, CDD, Utilities Department, Department of Public Works, Department of Human Services, Fire-Rescue District, and the Sheriff's Department.

*Department of Public Safety (DPS).* The DPS has three major functions: emergency management, 911, and 811. In terms of hazard mitigation, the Emergency Management Division has the lead role in dealing with hazard-related events. In that role, one of the Division's important functions involves overall coordination responsibility during

emergency events. The County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) serves as the countywide operational management plan for emergency events. It defines the roles and functions of all local governmental agencies and non-profit and private sector entities (e.g., American Red Cross, Florida Power & Light).

*CDD.* The CDD comprises two divisions: Planning and Zoning, and Building and Code Enforcement. The Planning and Zoning Division has primary responsibility for administering the County Comprehensive Plan, and appraising and updating it from time to time. Also, CDD serves as the lead agency relative to economic development/redevelopment in addition to functioning as staff to the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the countywide transportation planning agency. The division also plays an important role in environmental matters. It evaluates and assesses all environmental projects (e.g., shoreline stabilization projects, beach erosion initiatives, private development site plans), as well as administers various environmental ordinances (i.e., Environmentally Sensitive Lands, Sand Mining, Wellfield Protection).

In addition to its long-range planning role, the planning and zoning division is responsible for processing development petitions (i.e., rezoning petitions, site plans). The building division issues and oversees compliance with all building permits.

*Utilities Department.* This department is responsible for managing all County-owned water and wastewater facilities systems. They also are responsible for customer billing.

*Department of Public Works (DPW).* The DPW is responsible for designing, constructing, and maintaining drainage projects, roads and bridges, and street improvements, as well as for facilities that control vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

*Department of Human Services.* The Department of Human Services (DHS) administers several functions that have relevance to the LMS. The DHS has been designated as St. Lucie County's Council on Aging (COA); therefore, one of its responsibilities is dealing with individuals with special medical needs. Further, as the COA, it operates a community transit system of vans and small buses that serve not only the elderly, but handicapped, as well. Another function that the Department is involved in is housing. They administer housing programs, such as Seniors Housing Information Program and housing weatherization, and work closely with Habitat for Humanity.

*Fire-Rescue District.* The County Fire-Rescue District provides fire suppression, emergency medical services, fire prevention, and community education countywide. During declared emergencies, Fire-Rescue fulfills all activities related to Emergency Support Function (ESF) #4, Fire Fighting as described in the County's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. Besides emergency services, the Department provides other types of services. The District is responsible for ensuring that buildings comply with appropriate fire codes. The Department also offers public education programs that focus on fire safety guidelines for schools, community groups, and individuals. In addition, the Department has responsibility for coordination of fire protection, hazardous materials mitigation, and advance life support services.

*Sheriff's Office.* Traffic control is an important function of the Sheriff's Department. In terms of hazard-related events, traffic control is important in times of floods, hurricanes, and hazardous material spills. Securing areas devastated by a tornado or

hurricane to protect the lives and properties of the residents impacted by the event, or providing security during a situation where a building may have been damaged as a result of terrorist activity, are examples of important roles the Sheriff's office performs in ensuring public safety. The Sheriff's Office General Order 25 outlines several emergency-related plans currently being implemented within the County. These plans include Crisis Situations and Response, Civil Disturbance/Mass Arrest, Emergency Management, Response to School Shootings, VIP Protection/Special Events, Headquarters Evacuation Plan, Bomb Disposal Team, Crisis Negotiations Team, Search and Rescue Plan, Underwater Search and Recovery Team, Special Operations and Tactics Team, and Emergency Access to Airport Runways and Taxi-Ways. The Sheriff's Office also maintains an Emergency Management and Mobilization Plan. According to the Corrections Manual, the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Department has developed Infectious Disease Preventative Measures, Blood Borne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan, and Tropical Storms, Hurricanes, and Civil Defense plans. The Sheriff's Office is currently developing a jail facility evacuation plan for events involving weapons of mass destruction. The Office also is in the process of developing a Continuity of Operations plan.

*St. Lucie School District.* The School District operates independently from County government; however, the District is a major provider of public shelter space. Also, the District operates a large fleet of school buses that could be an important resource should mass movement of the population away from the area or site impacted by the hazard be necessary.

*St. Lucie County Health Department.* The Health Department is responsible for Emergency Support Function #8 (Health and Medical Services) in all emergency events. The Health Department maintains the following plans: Pandemic Plan, All Hazards Operational Plan, Point Distribution Plan, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Response Plan, Emergency Operations Plan, Small Pox Response Plan, and Potassium Iodide Distribution Plan.

### **3.5.2 County Mitigation Policies and Ordinances**

*Policy Plans.* The two key policy plans that address issues related to natural and technological hazards include the County Comprehensive Plan and the County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. They are described briefly below.

#### **1) County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan serves not only as a blueprint for St. Lucie County's future, but also as the County's policy document. It defines County positions as they relate to development and redevelopment. The Comprehensive Plan contains the nine required plan elements, as set out in Section 163.3161, F.S. They include Conservation, Coastal Management, Infrastructure (i.e., potable water, sanitary sewer, stormwater management, solid waste, natural aquifer recharge), Future Land Use, Housing, Recreation and Open Space, Transportation, Intergovernmental Coordination, and Capital Improvement. The issue of hazards is dealt with in five of the nine plan elements. A complete listing of all hazard mitigation relevant goals, objectives, and policies by plan element in the St. Lucie Comprehensive Plan is found in **Appendix A**.

Natural hazards, primarily flooding, hurricanes, drought, and beach erosion, are the focus of the Comprehensive Plan. Technological-type hazards such as aquifer contamination, wellfield contamination, and hazardous materials/waste accidents are addressed in several elements. The Future Land Use Element does not address increases in development intensity/density or directing population away from the CHHA; although the Coastal Management Element does state that “.. construction of County-funded public facilities in the coastal high hazard area shall be prohibited, unless the facility is necessary for public access, natural resource restoration or enhancement, or to provide for recreational facilities and other appropriate water dependent facilities.” The Element does contain a policy that “New sanitary sewer facilities in the hurricane zone shall be floodproofed to prevent inflow and ensure that raw sewage does not leak from them during flood events.” The County might consider making this a countywide requirement, not just applicable to a specific area. Both of the aforementioned issues need to be reassessed in light of redefinition of the CHHA. The Coastal Management Element also discusses the issue of emergency preparedness. Immediately following a hurricane, the County Commission appoints a Recovery Task Force that is responsible for reviewing and issuing emergency building permits; coordination with State and Federal disaster officials; and making recommendations concerning the reconstruction or relocation of damaged public facilities; and development of a redevelopment plan. While it may be implicit, there is no mention that the DPS, DEM would assume the lead role in directing and controlling activities during any disaster, including preparedness, response, and recovery.

A major focus of the Conservation Element is on development in the floodplain. Maintaining the functionality of the floodplain is emphasized. Also, the Element has a number of policies that center on protection from hazardous materials/waste.

The Comprehensive Plan in the Potable Water sub-element addresses issues related to drought: water conservation through xeriscaping, requiring use of irrigation quality (IQ) reclaimed water for irrigation, and requiring water saving devices in new construction.

## 2) St. Lucie County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

The Board of County Commissioners has an adopted CEMP. It is an operations-oriented document that establishes the framework for effective management by the County during emergencies and disasters. The CEMP addresses a broad range of hazards. They include

- hurricanes and tropical storms;
- flooding;
- freezes;
- wildland fires;
- tornadoes;
- droughts;
- property loss/agricultural hazards;
- hazardous materials;
- sinkholes and subsidence;

- fixed nuclear power facilities;
- coastal oil spill;
- dam failure;
- military ordnance from World War II;
- mass immigration; and
- armed violence (civil disturbance, terrorism, military conflict).

The CEMP addresses evacuation in terms of local and regional evacuation, public shelter, post-disaster response and recovery, rapid deployment of resources, communications and warning systems, training exercises, and agency responsibilities. These responsibilities are clearly delineated in 17 ESFs (**Table 3.1**). Each ESF is headed by a lead agency, which has been selected based on its authorities, resources, and capabilities in the functional area. The ESFs also serve as the primary mechanism through which outside assistance to St. Lucie County is coordinated.

### 3) Other Hazards Plans

Besides the CEMP, the St. Lucie County DPS has prepared a series of hazard plans that apply to unique situations. They include

- Coastal Oil Spill - Federal Region IV Oil & Hazardous Substances Regional Contingency Plan;
- Hazardous Materials - St. Lucie County Emergency Plan for Hazardous Materials;
- Nuclear Power Plants - State of Florida Radiological Emergency Management Plan;
- Emergency Notification - Emergency Alert System Plan (Operational Area 10);
- Military Support - Florida National Guard Operation Plan for Military Support to Civil Officials;
- Ports Contingency Plan - Coast Guard Contingency Plan for St. Lucie County;
- Airport Contingency Plan - St. Lucie County Airport Contingency Plan;
- LEPC - District 10 Local Emergency Planning Committee Hazardous Materials Plan; and
- St. Lucie County - Continuity of Operations Plan.

*Ordinances/Regulations.* Hazard-related ordinances are administered primarily by the CDD, or the St. Lucie County Fire-Rescue District. The list of relevant ordinances includes

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| • Flood Damage Prevention;             | • Overlay Zone;                    |
| • Countywide Wellfield;                | • Sand Mining;                     |
| • Protection;                          | • Fire Prevention Code;            |
| • Zoning;                              | • Environmentally Sensitive Lands; |
| • Building Code;                       | • Shoreline Protection; and        |
| • Hutchinson Island - Building Height; | • Coastal Area Protection          |

Table 3.1. Emergency support functions (ESFs) and their designations.

Emergency Support Function	Designation
Transportation	ESF - 1
Communications	ESF - 2
Public Works and Engineering	ESF - 3
Fire Fighting	ESF - 4
Information and Planning	ESF - 5
Mass Care	ESF - 6
Resource Management	ESF - 7
Health and Medical Services	ESF - 8
Search and Rescue	ESF - 9
Hazardous Materials	ESF - 10
Food and Water	ESF - 11
Energy and Utilities	ESF - 12
Military Support	ESF - 13
Public Information	ESF - 14
Volunteers and Donations	ESF - 15
Law Enforcement and Security	ESF - 16
Animal Protection	ESF - 17

Source: St. Lucie County Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management, 1998.

The County follows the Standard Building Code. All builders must adhere to the adopted 140-mph wind load requirement. Gable bracing and hurricane clips are required.

### 3.5.3 County Mitigation Projects/Initiatives

St. Lucie County has taken steps to mitigate potential impacts resulting from various types of hazards. Although not all inclusive, the following discussion provides some examples of the types of projects undertaken. Also, in anticipation of the unified, countywide LMS Project Prioritization List to be developed as part of this effort, the St. Lucie County LMS Steering Committee members were provided information about potential mitigation projects implemented throughout the United States, and the availability of potential funding sources (see **Appendix C**).

There are a number of projects and initiatives the County has implemented to mitigate potential damage resulting from various hazards. The County has acquired a number of important parcels in the CHHA through a local bond issue. Most were purchased because they exhibited environmentally significant habitat; however, the County also gained by reducing the intensity and density of development in a high risk area, the CHHA.

St. Lucie County also has made a statement of the importance of hazard mitigation, by incorporating within its Comprehensive Plan policy statements regarding the development of a countywide LMS. In addition to its CEMP, there are special hazard plans that apply to unique situations. They address hazards such as coastal oil spills, hazardous



materials, and airport safety. In addition, in a County that experiences substantial development annually, the Fire-Rescue District participates in the review of development proposals. The Fire-Rescue staff reviews and comments on whether there is adequate access to buildings by both personnel and apparatus, and whether there is adequate vehicle ingress and egress.

The Fire-Rescue District has a significant role relative to hazardous materials. The Department staff pre-identifies hazardous chemical waste facilities and pre-plans emergency response. In addition, staff works with the facility managers by assisting in writing their emergency operations/evacuation plans.

Also, as many other counties have done since Hurricane Andrew, St. Lucie County has upgraded its building code. The code now requires a finished floor elevation at 6 inches above the minimum 100-year flood level. The County's building code also requires corrosion resistant hurricane clips, water resistant adhesives for shingles, trusses manufactured in accordance with local wind models, and shutters for all new single family homes.

The County's Environmentally Sensitive Land Ordinance was adopted in 1990 to mitigate erosion and enhance and restore the beaches and dunes along its coastal shorelines. The County avoids the use of shoreline armoring (except as a measure of last resort). Preferred alternatives include beach nourishment and dune restoration. Erosion along its inland waterways, (i.e., North Fork of the St. Lucie River, Five Mile Creek, Ten Mile Creek) has been a concern too and is addressed in the Environmentally Sensitive Ordinance, Section 6.02.02.

The St. Lucie County Health Department sponsors several hazard related programs including annual nuclear accident and hurricane drills. The Department also conducted a hazardous materials spill drill and a Small Pox Drill at the St. Lucie Medical Center. Since 2002, the Health Department has been involved in Operation Vaccinate Florida Phases I, II, and III.

Between 2002 and 2003, St. Lucie County completed a number of drainage and stormwater improvement projects. These projects include retrofits at Paradise Park, South 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Harmony Heights, Rouse Road, and Indian River Estates. The County also has acquired several properties associated with the White City drainage program.

### **3.6 MUNICIPALITIES**

#### **3.6.1 Listing of Municipal Agencies**

The organizational structure of each municipality in the County differs in terms of organizational complexity and functional responsibility. A city like Port St. Lucie (population – 88,769 [2000 estimate]) has an organizational structure that is considerably more complex than St. Lucie Village.

The following is a brief discussion of typical agencies within the municipal organizational structure having hazard mitigation functional responsibilities.

*Emergency Management.* The responsibility for emergency management in Port St. Lucie falls under the Director of Public Works. While in Fort Pierce, a staff officer with

the Police Department is charged with the responsibility. Both jurisdictions have established Emergency Management Committees comprising key departments and have emergency operations plans. In St. Lucie Village, emergency management is handled more informally, as there are only 608 people in the community. The municipality has no emergency management plan; however, since the Village operates with no full-time staff, it is important that the Village have a emergency operations plan in place, in order to be able to respond effectively during a disaster. The Village depends, to a large extent, upon the County Division of Emergency Management.

*Planning.* Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce have planning departments with professional staffs. The departments review zoning petitions, site plans, and other development orders (e.g., variances, special exceptions), and administer their local comprehensive plan. Planning in the Village is accomplished primarily by the Village Board of Aldermen. From time to time, they contract for planning services.

*Building Departments.* All the municipalities issue their own building permits. All operate under the Standard Building Code. Modifications are made to the various sections (e.g., building, plumbing, fire) of the Code from time to time; however, municipalities may or may not amend their local building code to reflect those changes.

*Public Works Departments.* Both Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce have Public Works Departments. The primary responsibilities for the departments are engineering design, implementing structural improvements (e.g., stormwater facility retrofit, shuttering buildings, constructing new Emergency Operation Centers), and maintaining the facilities. The Village contracts for services. Historically, St. Lucie County has assisted the Village in maintaining its drainage system since the Village has no staff to perform the needed maintenance. St. Lucie County maintains drainage pipes and structures at the east end of the “Ray Lein-Pitch,” and the Village employs contractors to perform all other maintenance on drainage facilities.

*Fire Service.* All cities contract with the County Fire-Rescue District for fire protection. In incidents where hazardous materials spills occur, both Fort Pierce and Port St. Lucie municipal police departments will support Fire-Rescue efforts by assisting with traffic control.

### **3.6.2 Municipal Mitigation Policies and Ordinances**

*Municipal Comprehensive Plans.* Like the County, each city has an adopted Comprehensive Plan. They serve as a policy instrument for each city, and define the particular city’s development and redevelopment policies. All plans contain the required nine plan elements: Conservation, Coastal Management, Infrastructure (i.e., potable water, sanitary sewer, stormwater management, solid waste, natural aquifer recharge), Future Land Use, Housing, Recreation and Open Space, Transportation, Intergovernmental Coordination, and Capital Improvement. Six of the nine plan elements address hazards. **Table 3.2** summarizes, in a matrix format by jurisdiction, type of hazards by plan element.

Each municipal comprehensive plan has been reviewed. Specific mitigation-related objectives and policies have been identified and have been described and cross-referenced in **Appendix A**.

Table 3.2. Comprehensive Growth Management Plan hazard mitigation inventory.

Comprehensive Plan Elements	St. Lucie County	Municipalities		
		Fort Pierce	Port St. Lucie	St. Lucie Village
<b>Conservation</b>	A,D,E,F,HZ,NT,W	A,D,E,HZ,W	A,D,E,F,H,NT,P,W	A,D,E,F,HZ,W
<b>Coastal Management</b>	E,F,H,HZ,NT,P	D,E,F,H,HZ,P	A,D,E,F,H,NT,P,W	E,F,H,NT,P
<b>Infrastructure</b>	D,F,HZ,W	D,F,HZ,P,W	D,F,FI,H,HZ,W	D,F,NT,W
<b>Future Land Use</b>	F,H,W	F,H,W	E,F,NT,W	F,H,NT,W
<b>Housing</b>				
<b>Recreation and Open Spaces</b>				
<b>Transportation</b>				
<b>Intergovernmental Coordination</b>				
<b>Capital Improvement</b>	E,F,H	E,F,H	NT	E,F,H
Ports, Aviation, and Associated Facilities				
Utilities				
Health and Human Services				
Public Education				
Fire Rescue				
Economic				
Library				
Historical Preservation				

**Bold** = Mandatory Comp Plan Element; A = Air Quality; D = Drought; E = Erosion; F = Flood; FI = Fire; H = Hurricane; HZ = Hazardous Materials; N = Nuclear Disaster; NT = Natural and Technological Disasters; P = Post-Disaster Redevelopment; W = Wellfield Contamination.

Regardless of municipality, most hazard-related issues are addressed in four plan elements of the Comprehensive Plan: Conservation, Future Land Use, Infrastructure, and Coastal Management. Any proposed capital projects identified in the plan elements also are identified in the Capital Improvement Element (CIE), the financial management component of the Comprehensive Plan. As recommended in Section 163.3177(3)(a), CIEs should be reviewed and updated annually. In practice, no local government in St. Lucie County updates their CIE except at the time they are statutorily required to prepare their Evaluation and Appraisal Report.

While local government comprehensive plans have a lot of similarities in their objectives and policies, there are variations. Some of the variations are highlighted below and read as follows:

1) City of Fort Pierce

- Coordinate with the South Florida Water Management District to plug abandoned, free flowing artesian wells;
- Increase public shelter space;
- Restrict development and direct the concentration away from the coast;
- Give high priority to critical evacuation road links in terms of annual maintenance and capital improvement expenditures; and
- Notify its residents annually of its hurricane procedures and shelters for those with special needs, such as the handicapped or infirmed.

2) City of Port St. Lucie

- Investigate the feasibility of expanding reuse of treated wastewater for irrigation and landscaping;
- Promote the use of IQ water for non-residential irrigation;
- Complete new road and improvements in the coastal planning area to increase the number of traffic lanes for hurricane evacuation; and
- Prepare and adopt an emergency water management conservation plan.

3) Village of St. Lucie

- Structures that suffer repeated damage to pilings, foundations, or loadbearing walls shall be modified to delete the areas most prone to damage.
- In accordance with Section 163.3202, F.S., the Village shall revise land development regulations to include requirements for the use of soil water tensiometers, or other similar devices, in all irrigation systems for all new development or redevelopment;
- The Village shall utilize the St. Lucie County Soil and Water Conservation District guidelines in the development of regulations for minimizing soil erosion; and
- The Town of St. Lucie Village will not expend public funds for infrastructure or service facilities in CHHAs, except to ensure public safety or to acquire or enhance natural resources.

### *Building Codes.*

#### 1) City of Fort Pierce

The City updated its building codes in regards to wind, water, and fire in December of 2001. The City building code requires structures east of U.S. Highway 1 to be built to a wind load requirement of 140 mph and structures west of U.S. Highway 1 to be built to 130 mph.

#### 2) Port St. Lucie

The City's building code requires structures east of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River to withstand 140-mph wind loads and requires structures west of the river to withstand 130-mph wind loads.

#### 3) St. Lucie Village

The Village has adopted by ordinance the Standard Building Code and all amendments. New construction east of U.S. Highway 1 in the Village must be built to meet the wind load requirement of 140 mph. In addition, hurricane clips and gable bracing also are required.

### *Other Ordinances.*

#### 1) City of Fort Pierce

In addition to its building code, the City has several other ordinances that regulate development within the City. They include its Flood Hazard Prevention Ordinance, which regulates the elevation of structures in the CHHA; filling, grading and dredging, and placement of manufactured housing. The City's utility code contains provisions that regulate the use of water during periods of drought.

The City also entered into an interlocal agreement with the County in 1998, which addresses local and regional emergency response capability for containing and cleaning up hazardous waste accidents occurring in area waterways. Based on the agreement, the City has agreed to store the oil spill cleanup equipment.

The City established a landscape and tree ordinance in 2002 that addresses hurricanes, tornadoes, and agricultural pests and diseases.

The City has addressed roads and evacuation routes with chronic flooding in the City Strategic Emergency Management Plan. The City Strategic Management Plan's Landscape and tree ordinance addresses the susceptibility of Australian Pine to heavy rain and wind events. The maintenance of drainage basins, redevelopment in hazard prone areas, and utility function on the barrier island are addressed in the City Comprehensive Plan. Utilities are addressed again along with critical facilities in the City Strategy Management Plan.

## 2) City of Port St. Lucie

The City has a number of ordinances other than the building code that address various hazard events. One is a flood damage prevention and drainage ordinance. Others include a wellfield protection ordinance, stormwater utility rules, and a burn ordinance. The City also has two unique disaster-related ordinances: emergency purchasing procedures, and an expedited permitting process following a major disaster.

## 3) Town of St. Lucie Village

For the past 20 years, the Village has had a flood damage prevention ordinance, which is administered by the St. Lucie Village Board of Aldermen.

### 3.6.3 Municipal Mitigation Projects/Initiatives

An LMS survey and update datasheet were prepared and distributed to all participating local governments as a means to inventory and assemble data on mitigation projects and initiatives each governmental entity had or is implementing. During the original LMS planning process, the surveys were distributed prior to conducting in-field interviews with each local government. The datasheets were used to update the information collected through the surveys in the original LMS planning process.

The LMS survey and datasheets requested information about projects (i.e., capital improvements) and initiatives (e.g., property acquisition, upgraded building codes, incentives, public information campaigns, preparedness training and drills, professional development seminars). The in-field visits were extremely important in verifying information contained in the LMS survey; however, the visits are very valuable in explaining the program to the various city departments, clarifying existing municipal hazard mitigation projects, and identifying new projects. There is variation among the municipalities. The following provides a brief discussion of the accomplishments of each jurisdiction.

*City of Fort Pierce.* Although not formalized as a hazard mitigation program, the City through various departments has implemented a number of mitigation-type projects. The following highlights some of them.

- Due to the age of the existing stormwater management system, improving the City's drainage system is a high priority. A major project underway is the Moore's Creek Retrofit. Phases I and II have been completed; however, additional phases remain to be completed.
- A key facility in the downtown area is the Fort Pierce Marina. The city reduced its exposure to damage by installing floating docks and new gas and water lines.
- Improvements to the Fort Pierce Jetty along with renourishing South Beach, have mitigated beach erosion. These improvements have been accomplished through the cooperative efforts of the City and County.
- The most important non-capital improvement project the City has implemented in recent years is the creation of the Emergency Management Committee established in 1997. This group is composed of all key City departments. From February to October, the staff meet on a bi-weekly basis.

Through the efforts of the Committee, the City now has an Emergency Management Operations Plan.

- The City distributes public information to its employees as well as residents. *City News* is a monthly employee newsletter the City uses to keep its employees informed on a wide variety of issues. Also, the City is able to put stuffers in the FPUA's monthly bills. The City also has prepared a pamphlet on pets and disasters, which it has made available to its residents.
- City staff attends the Annual Governor's Hurricane Conference, FEMA training sessions, and seminars on various building-related topics.
- The City completed an outfall project on Virginia Avenue in October of 1989 to improve stormwater drainage.

*City of Port St. Lucie.* The City of Port St. Lucie has completed or is in the process of completing a number of capital projects that have been built with mitigation in mind. Two new public structures were recently completed, the Police Department and Community Center. Both have been built to withstand 140-mph wind loads. The Community Center also functions as the City Emergency Operations Center and as a special needs shelter. Also, City Hall has undergone major expansion. It has been built to withstand 140-mph winds.

Other mitigation-type activities the City has accomplished in recent years include

- A reverse 911 emergency phone system;
- The Purchasing Department expanded its vendor list, and it continually updates the list to keep it current. Also, the City has joined the statewide network of purchasing departments;
- The City has an emergency agreement with several local gas stations in the event the City gas pumps located at the Public Works Department fail to operate;
- Prior to a hurricane, the Building Department officials notify all contractors operating within the City to secure their building sites;
- The City has worked with the County, implementing a countywide radio system known as 811;
- The City has purchased a floodplain along the North Fork of the St. Lucie River;
- Conducted a hurricane tabletop exercise;
- Developed public service announcements for drainage improvements on Port St. Lucie Television 20 (PSLTV 20);
- Developed a loop presentation on drainage activities for PSLTV 20;
- Conducts a hurricane preparation meeting with the emergency management team during hurricane season; and
- Developed hurricane preparedness public services announcements in preparation for Hurricane Isabel for PSLTV 20.

*Town of St. Lucie Village.* The Village has completed an inventory of its drainage facilities. The next phase will be to identify problems and solutions. However, the Village is not waiting until the study is complete before curing some of its drainage problems. There have been some ditch clearing and yard drainage improvements made. Also, the Town through assistance from the County carries out regularly scheduled maintenance of its stormwater drainage system.

The Village filed for and received approval of funds to purchase a 76.55-acre tract of land bordering the Indian River Lagoon. The site has both natural resource and historical significance. Because the site borders the Indian River Lagoon, shoreline protection and preservation of a resource that mitigates damage from coastal storms and hurricanes are additional benefits of the purchase.

### **3.7 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

Community organizations can range from faith-based organizations to Chambers of Commerce to the local historical society. These groups represent the diverse interests present within a community and provide vital services to the community as well. Many services provided by St. Lucie County's community organizations can help to achieve the goals of hazard mitigation identified in this mitigation strategy. The following lists provide information on services provided by organizations that work within St. Lucie County to reduce the risks posed by disasters.

#### **3.7.1 University of Florida/St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension**

The St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension is active in promoting hazard mitigation in St. Lucie County. The Extension's past mitigation-related activities include

- Hurricane Preparedness Handbooks;
- Hurricane Preparedness Public Presentations;
- Florida Building Code Research-based Revisions;
- Insurance Coverage Education;
- TV/Radio Storm Preparation Programs;
- Hurricane House Website;
- Hurricane House Tours/Educational Programs;
- West Nile Virus Protection Community Education;
- Invasive Plant Management Training;
- Fireant Control Training;
- Pesticide and the Environment Courses;
- Firewise/Fire Hazard Reduction Education;
- Aquatic Plant Management Training;
- Wildlife Management Education;
- Public Health Pesticide Training;
- Canker Education;
- Agricultural Insect/Disease Agent Information and Identification;
- Water Quality Protection Education;
- West Nile Virus Vaccination Recommendation Update;
- Best Management Practices Cattle Notebook;
- Hurricane Preparedness for Pets and Livestock; and
- Clean Marina Program.

#### **3.7.2 FPUA**

The FPUA has replaced 8 miles of vulnerable water mains located on South AIA on the barrier island. FPUA also has been engaged in the following activities:



- FPUA Storm Manual;
- Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment of Water Systems for the FPUA; and
- Hurricane Awareness bill stuffers.

### **3.8 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

Disasters know no boundaries; governments and service providers must work together to strengthen communities against the loss of life and property. An essential element of the hazard mitigation process is intergovernmental coordination. Coordination is important not only horizontally at the local level between County, municipalities, non-profit organizations, and the private sector, but also vertically with key State and Federal agencies. Besides the potential of the LMS initiative, there are several other coordination mechanisms that already exist. They are described briefly below.

#### **3.8.1 Metropolitan Planning Organization**

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) coordinates local, State, and Federal funding for thoroughfare improvements. The policy board is comprised of elected officials from the County and the municipalities. Two key policy documents of the MPO is the long-range transportation plan, and the 5-year transportation improvement plan (TIP). The TIP identifies and schedules all future roadway improvements in the near-term.

#### **3.8.2 Local Government Comprehensive Plans**

One mechanism to achieve intergovernmental coordination is the local comprehensive plan. As described above, each comprehensive plan contains an intergovernmental coordination plan element. In St. Lucie County, there are several instances in which local governments are dependent upon another entity to provide services. Examples include the Fort Pierce Utilities Authority providing water and sewer to the City of Fort Pierce; also, all local governments contract with the St. Lucie County Fire District for fire protection and emergency medical services.

#### **3.8.3 St. Lucie County Comprehensive Emergency Plan**

A second mechanism that has relevance, is the County's CEMP. The CEMP must be integrated into and coordinated with emergency management plans and programs of the State and Federal government. It is operations-oriented and addresses evacuation in terms of local and regional evacuation, public shelter, post-disaster response and recovery, rapid deployment of resources, communications and warning systems, training exercises, and agency responsibilities. These responsibilities are clearly defined as 17 ESFs (**Table 3.1**; see page 3-16). Each ESF is headed by a lead agency, which has been selected based on its authorities, resources, and capabilities in the functional area. The ESFs also serve as the primary mechanism through which outside assistance to St. Lucie County is coordinated.

#### **3.8.4 District X Local Emergency Planning Committee**

The LEPC is an important vehicle to coordinate administering regional compliance with hazardous materials reporting and training laws. The TCRPC provides staff to administer the activities of the Committee.

#### **3.8.5 State Emergency Management Plan**

The State of Florida CEMP establishes the framework for a coordination system to ensure that the State of Florida will be prepared to respond to emergencies and disasters. The plan describes roles and responsibilities of State agencies, special districts, local governments, and voluntary organizations. The CEMP unites the efforts of these groups for a comprehensive approach. The plan is divided into three sections.

The Basic Plan: Outlines how the State will assist counties in response, recovery, and mitigation of disasters; details responsibility at various levels of government; describes method of operations and financial management policies; ensures continuity of government; and addresses recovery issues.

Specific Response/Recovery Actions: These actions are unique to a specific hazard and take the place of the Basic Plan and Response Functions sections.

Response Functional Annexes: Presents the State's strategy for disaster response by outlining ESF. ESFs are structured from the Federal Response Plan.

### **3.9 STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

As has been described in the text, local governments in St. Lucie County have taken steps to strengthen themselves both in terms of capital facility improvements and ordinances, regulations, and programs. Becoming more disaster-resistant is not limited just to the hardening of public infrastructure. There are a number of activities that the County and municipalities can undertake to strengthen the role of local governments to lessen the impacts resulting from emergency events that do not require expending money on capital projects. Plans can be modified, laws and regulations can be amended, informational materials published and distributed, and professional training augmented. Ideas were generated from a variety of sources, interviews with local jurisdictions, and information generated from LMS survey forms, the LMS Steering Committee and subcommittees, and discussions with local governments. The suggestions resulting from the various discussions with local government include

- 1) Projects on the LMS Prioritized Project List should be incorporated in local government comprehensive plans, CIEs, at the time the CIEs are reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with Section 163.3177(3)(a), F.S.
- 2) As permitted under Section 163.3177(7)(h)&(l), F.S., local governments should seriously consider incorporating an optional comprehensive plan element for public safety that focuses on hazard mitigation issues.

- 3) Integrating the LMS into the St. Lucie County CEMP, and each municipal emergency management plan.
- 4) Making all communities CRS eligible (The Town of St. Lucie Village is in the NFIP program, but not in the CRS program).
- 5) Assessing existing CRS programs to determine ways to strengthen and improve the local jurisdiction's CRS rating.
- 6) Requesting technical assistance from the TCRPC to augment CRS.
- 7) Designing and implementing a hazard mitigation retrofit program.
- 8) Aiding local governments in community-wide grant applications and engineering assistance.
- 9) Retrofitting American Red Cross or other approved shelters.
- 10) Monitoring the outcome of the Florida Building Commission. Be prepared to evaluate the existing building code, identify deficiencies, and recommend desired changes to strengthen the existing building code.
- 11) The designing and bidding of all public building construction, whether it be new construction or renovation of older public structures, should incorporate hazard mitigation building practices, whenever financially feasible.
- 12) Requiring all mobile home parks to retrofit a community building engineered to withstand Category 3 hurricane windloads and an F2 tornado. An adequate warning system needs to be incorporated into the retrofit. Such a structure would then provide the mobile home park residents a safe haven refuge should such an event occur. Once constructed, the mobile home park administration should conduct mock drills to familiarize the residents with the procedure they need to follow should the occasion arise that they would need to evacuate to the safe haven refuge.
- 13) Implementing a safe room requirement in the local building codes that addresses not only new construction, but renovation as well.
- 14) Establishing a uniform records storage policy for all departments to follow, in order to ensure the safe protection of them from the impacts resulting from disasters.
- 15) Through the vehicle of the LMS Steering Committee, establish a countywide, unified wildland fire mitigation program drawing upon the expertise and knowledge of the FDOF, and the St. Lucie Fire District.
- 16) All jurisdictions should prepare and adopt post-disaster redevelopment plans.
- 17) Getting year-round coverage in the local media to get the message out to people, not only that it is important to have a plan should a disaster occur, but that taking steps to mitigate hazards before they occur saves dollars, not only for government, but for its residents and businesses, too.
- 18) Establishing a Private Sector Subcommittee to the LMS Steering Committee. Seek out, not only leaders of businesses and organizations that are interested in hazard mitigation, but are willing to commit time and resources to ensure an Action Plan defining specific tasks and/or projects that reduce the adverse effects of hazards is implemented.
- 19) Working with the Private Sector Subcommittee to develop procedures that ensure coordination and mutual support between the County and business community, before, during and after a disaster event.
- 20) Helping the Private Sector Subcommittee prepare a business contingency handbook and providing support in holding training workshops for local business owners.
- 21) Increasing involvement of businesses in the planning of the 2000 Disaster Preparedness Expo.

### **3.10 PRIVATE SECTOR BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

During events such as hurricanes, there can be massive disruption of the local economy. However, due to the lack of frequency over the past 20 years, even with Hurricane Andrew in 1992, people have become somewhat complacent about such events. This also is reflected in the business community, as well as community organizations, such as homeowner associations. Large firms like Florida Power & Light Company, Southern Bell, Piper Aircraft, Publix, as well as the banking community have prepared contingency plans in case of such an event. It is primarily among the smaller businesses where hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness has minimal attention. September 11<sup>th</sup> has certainly raised the awareness again among the business community of the need to be prepared.

As part of the LMS effort, the St. Lucie County CDD extended invitations to the businesses and community organizations to participate as a member of the LMS Steering Committee. The St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce and Florida Light & Power Company were the only two entities that had any degree of participation in the original planning process. There is a definite need to augment private sector involvement, before the private sector can become a player in the communities' hazard mitigation efforts. The most important activity that needs to be implemented is the creation of a LMS Private Sector Subcommittee. Business owners speaking to business owners of the need to plan ahead and be prepared for the eventuality of a disaster is the most effective method of articulating the message that hazard mitigation is an issue that the private sector community needs to attend to seriously.

First and foremost, is energizing the interest of businesses to become involved in the process in the first place. In most communities, there are businesses that clearly understand that it is in their interest to develop a hazard mitigation plan prior to an actual event occurring. These are the organizations that need to become the core private sector groups that spread the word about the importance of "being prepared," taking steps and creating a plan before the disaster occurs. The Private Sector Subcommittee needs to develop materials that raise awareness and educate businesses of the need to be prepared for potential disasters. This also may include telling the story in a variety of forums, such as chamber of commerce meetings, ministerial association meetings, and homeowner associations. At the same time, the Subcommittee should have as a goal, the preparation of an Action Plan that defines specific tasks and deliverables to be undertaken during a set time frame.

Beyond awareness and education, other roles that private sector entities might undertake as a means to achieve a higher degree of sustainability might include developing a business contingency planning guide and follow-up technical workshops, and creating a private sector – emergency support function (a procedure to assist the business community during a disaster event), not only does the business community benefit, but the community as a whole benefits as well. Both activities would mitigate against the local economy becoming disrupted, making the community more disaster-resistant.